

SCM'S REVOLUTIONARY DEVOTIONAL

Forget everything you think you know about religion.

Karl Marx famously said, "Religion is the opiate of the masses." But also, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world."

Religion has been (mis)used to justify terrible oppression - including slavery, sexism, homophobia and war - but the Bible is actually full of liberating messages that can radically challenge the powers that be in our world today.

This struggle is for all, not just Christians. But as the dominant religion of Western capitalist culture, it is urgent that we who follow Jesus of Nazareth find our radical roots and reclaim our faith - this is how we understand 'discipleship.'

We at the Student Christian Movement believe that true political revolution is impossible without *both* a total re-ordering of our world system, *and* a total change of heart. Imperialism, racism and privilege are deeply embedded in our culture; radical prayer is one path to begin finding our way out of Empire.

Reflecting ancient tradition in new ways, we have given each day of the week a reading, reflection and mantra for meditation, as well as some ideas on prayer. **Solidarity!**

HOW TO MEDITATE

Many spiritual traditions teach silent forms of prayer. The Christian tradition, too, has ancient sources of wisdom here. Jesus often sought guidance in silent prayer in the midst of his revolutionary ministry, as did the earliest nuns and monks exiled when Christianity became the Empire's religion in the 4th century. Prayer can reduce stress, re-align ourselves with God's will for us, and renew our commitment to continue struggling for justice and peace in our world. Contemplation in action can be a spring of living water in a world in urgent need of healing, renewal and hope.

WHAT IS SCM?



Founded in 1921, the Student Christian Movement is a national youth-led movement passionate about justice, community & spirituality.

We engage the prophetic teachings of the revolutionary Jesus of Nazareth. As an ecumenical movement, we include people of many beliefs and faiths seeking to explore and challenge the Christian tradition.

www.scmcanada.org

COMPLINE (NIGHT PRAYER)

OPENING

God of peace, grant us a quiet night and perfect end. You bring rest for the weary, hope for the hopeless, and freedom for the oppressed.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

As the day ends, I recall the ways I have practiced compassion, solidarity, peace and justice...

I also recall the times today when I've fallen short of my values, hurt others, harmed the environment, or objectified another...

In our broken world, heal us.
In our injustices, re-form us.
In our mistakes, forgive us. Amen.

SILENT MEDITATION

GRATITUDE & PRAYERS

Today, I am thankful for.....

My heart aches for.....

Amen!

www.scmcanada.org



Toll-free 1-8-PROPHETIC
info@scmcanada.org

YOUR LOCAL CONTACT:

Download or order this resource

Student Christian Movement of Canada (2008)
www.scmcanada.org/resources/devotional

WEBSITES & MAGAZINES

All Things New | www.scmcanada.org/atn

Catholic Worker | www.catholicworker.org

Center for Action and Contemplation |
www.cacradicalgrace.org

Geez | www.geezmagazine.org

Jesus Radicals | www.jesusradicals.com

Sojourners | www.sojo.net

BOOKS

Matthew Fox: *Prayer: A Radical Response to Life*

Carter Heyward: *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation*

Ada María Isasi-Díaz et al: *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective*

Sylvia Keesmaat & Brian Walsh: *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire*

Thomas Merton: *Contemplative Prayer*

Ched Myers et al: *Say to This Mountain*



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DEVOTIONAL

**THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN
AND A NEW EARTH ...
'LOOK, HERE GOD LIVES
AMONG HUMAN BEINGS
... GOD-WITH-THEM ...
THE WORLD OF THE
PAST HAS GONE.**

Revelation 21:1-4

SUNDAY

GOD WITHIN YOU

“The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”

Luke 17:20-21

meditation mantra

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

“ Today, we must claim back the power to look at the Bible with our own eyes and to stress that divine immanence is within us, not in something sealed off and handed down from almost 2000 years ago.”

- Kwok Pui-Lan, post-colonial feminist theologian

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TUESDAY

OPPRESSION

The Israelites, groaning in their slavery, cried out for help. And from the depths of their slavery their cry came up to God. God heard their groaning ... Moses said to God, ‘Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ ‘I shall be with you,’ God said.

Exodus 2:23-3:12

meditation mantra

Send your breath and life begins;

Renew the face of the earth.

Psalm 104:30

“ By delivering this people from Egyptian bondage ... God reveals that he is the God of the oppressed, involved in their history, liberating them from human bondage... Those who die for freedom have not died in vain; they will see the Kingdom of God.”

- James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*

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FRIDAY

MONEY

‘No one can be the slave of two masters ... You cannot be the slave of both God and of money. That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat ... Set your hearts on God’s kingdom first, and on his saving justice, and all these things will be given you.’

Jesus, in Matthew 6:24-33

meditation mantra

Praise God, sun and moon; .

Praise God, shining stars.

Psalm 148:3-4

“ The only way to live in any true security is to live so close to the bottom that when you fall you do not have far to drop, you do not have much to lose.”

- Dorothy Day (1897-1980): Christian anarchist, founder of the Catholic Worker movement

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WEDNESDAY

REVOLUTIONARY ATTITUDE

‘Blessed are you who are poor: the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are hungry now: you shall have your fill. Blessed are you who are weeping now: you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal ... your reward will be great...’

Jesus, in Luke 6:20

meditation mantra

Rest, O my soul, in God ... Source of hope.

Psalm 62:1

“ Even when they call us mad, when they call us subversives and communists and all the epithets they put on us, we know we only preach the subversive witness of the Beatitudes, which have turned everything upside down.”

- Archbishop Oscar Romero (martyred by U.S.-trained assassins in El Salvador, 1989)

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SATURDAY

CROSSING TO THE 'OTHER' SIDE

Making her stand in the middle, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and in the Law Moses has ordered us to stone women of this kind. What have you to say?' ... Jesus said, 'Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her.' ... Jesus was left alone with the woman ... 'Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus.

John 8:3-11

meditation mantra

My soul thirsts, my body longs for You.

Psalm 63:1

“ The Word for our sake became poverty clothed as the poor... The Word blew its spirit over the dried bones of the Mummified-Churches, guardians of silence... The Word awoke us from the lethargy which was stealing all our Hope. ”

- Julian Esquivel, Guatemalan poet

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THURSDAY

LIBERATION

Is that the sort of fast that pleases me, a day when a person inflicts pain on himself? ... Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me: To break unjust chains, to undo the bindings of oppression, to let the oppressed go free? ... Then your light will blaze out like the dawn ... God will always guide you.

Isaiah 58: 5-11

meditation mantra

Guide our feet into the ways of peace.

Zachariah, in Luke 1:79

“ I don't see myself as a pacifist. I see myself rather as a violent person trying to become nonviolent... The examples Jesus gives are something more than nonresistance. They are gutsy, courageous, and aggressive. ”

- Walter Wink (antiapartheid activist, theologian of nonviolence)

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SACRED SPACE

Few things are sacred in fast-paced capitalist culture. Carve out a special place for prayer every day, and create a special spot with a candle and cushion where there are few distractions. Also, try taking a weekly Sabbath ('day of rest') from activism and work, and devote it to self-care or building community.

CENTERING PRAYER

Sit comfortably, in a quiet place. Slowly read the day's scripture passage, and then just rest in stillness for 15-20 minutes, closing your eyes if you need to. Pray to yourself: 'I consent to God's presence in my life.' When your thoughts wander, gently bring your attention back to your breath. Set an alarm if it helps.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Another tool is to use a short sacred phrase to center our hearts. Read it slowly aloud, then repeat it silently. When your attention wanders, gently return to the words. Use either our suggested Psalm mantra each day, or a word like '**Ma-ra-na-tha**' (which means 'Come, Lord' in Jesus' language Aramaic).

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MONDAY

HOW TO LIVE?

What does the Lord require of you? To seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

meditation mantra

In your justice, give me life.

Psalm 143:11

“ When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist. ”

- Dom Helder Camara (Brazilian liberation theologian)

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